United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 24, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We urge the Trump administration to immediately fulfill any outstanding U.S. assessed contribution to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Delays in U.S. contributions to international institutions weaken American influence and disrupt global initiatives that protect Americans. At the OPCW, the outstanding U.S. assessment is contributing to financial uncertainty within the organization and is inhibiting efforts to eliminate chemical weapons, investigate their use, and prevent their proliferation. Fulfilling this commitment would help sustain these essential national security functions.

The OPCW implements the Chemical Weapons Convention, advancing the global effort to eliminate chemical weapons and prevent their re-emergence. In addition, the OPCW conducts routine industry inspections to help prevent the diversion of dual-use chemicals to illicit purposes. Sustained monitoring and verification are essential to reducing the risk that chemical weapons materials or expertise are developed by or transferred to malign actors.

As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared in 1997, the Convention has "made in America written all over it." Championed by President Reagan, negotiated under President George H.W. Bush, and approved by the Republican-led Senate in a bipartisan vote in 1997, the treaty reflects decades of American leadership. The OPCW received the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. The Department of State's own budget request identifies OPCW among organizations that make America "safer and more secure."

Despite this, public reporting by the Washington Post indicates that the United States has paid only 20 percent of its 2026 OPCW assessment, which represents roughly one-fifth of the organization's annual budget. These contributions support on-site inspections, chemical weapons destruction activities, laboratory analysis, and physical and cyber security measures needed to protect sensitive information. Delays in U.S. payments are jeopardizing critical work to confront chemical weapons threats in key global hotspots, including Syria, Ukraine, and Sudan.

In Syria, cooperation with the new government in Damascus has created an important opportunity to identify and eliminate the remnants of the Assad regime's chemical weapons program. In August, the OPCW verified the destruction of declared Syrian chemical weapons for the first time since 2014. Yet on October 6, Director-General Sabrina Dallafior Matter warned: "We may have to curtail core activities if the situation does not improve soon, including in

relation to Syria deployments and other forms of technical assistance." She added: "That is the stark reality."

In Ukraine, OPCW laboratories have confirmed the presence of the riot control agent CS in samples associated with frontline incidents, providing important evidence for investigating potential violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of such agents as a method of warfare. The OPCW also provides equipment and training to help Ukrainians detect and respond to chemical threats. At the OPCW Executive Council's October meeting, Ukraine urged member states to sustain the organization's capacity to investigate chemical weapons use and help establish responsibility for violations. Delaying payment of U.S. dues undermines the OPCW's ability to do precisely this work.

In Sudan, the Department formally determined in April 2025 that the Government of Sudan, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and backed by the Sudanese Armed Forces, used chemical weapons in violation of international law and subsequently imposed sanctions on Khartoum. In September 2026, disturbing new revelations about Sudan's production and use of chemical weapons were published in the New York Times and Washington Post. The OPCW is monitoring reports of chemical weapons use and seeking further information from member states. Withholding funding from the OPCW undermines its capacity to support and amplify the very allegations the Department has raised. The United States cannot demand accountability for chemical weapons use while starving the institution equipped to investigate it of essential resources.

While we support rigorous oversight and transparency of U.S. contributions to international organizations, the OPCW has demonstrated clear value in reducing chemical weapons threats and keeping Americans safe. It performs verification and investigation activities that the United States would otherwise have to undertake at significantly greater cost in personnel, resources, and risk—or could not undertake at all in some cases involving U.S. adversaries. Unilateral efforts would struggle to match the OPCW's access, independent verification, and threat-reduction capabilities.

On September 25, 2026, a cross-partisan group of 19 national security and chemical weapons experts, including former U.S. Ambassador to the OPCW Robert Mikulak, wrote to you urging full payment of the U.S. assessment and warning that funding shortfalls threatened inspections and verification missions. We urge you to heed that warning, remit the full outstanding U.S. assessment without further delay. Please provide Congress with an accounting of U.S. assessed contributions that distinguishes amounts obligated from amounts actually disbursed, identifies the assessment year covered by each payment and any outstanding balance, and explains the reasons for any delays and the timetable for completing payment.

American leadership requires sustained engagement with the institutions that help protect our security. International cooperation is essential to addressing threats that cross borders. On the heels of cuts to U.S. support for the World Health Organization, which helps protect Americans from the spread of Ebola, curtailing programs that prevent the use and proliferation of chemical weapons only serves to make Americans less safe and the world less stable. Ensuring that these critical institutions have the resources and U.S. engagement they need to carry out their missions

strengthens our ability to respond to shared challenges and advance American interests. We urge you to pay the United States' outstanding OPCW funding immediately and restore America's commitment to the international cooperation our security demands.

Sincerely,

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Andy Kim
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator